

Message Text

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PAGE 01 KHARTO 03780 160843Z
ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08
INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01
L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 ICA-11 AID-05
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-----105468 161002Z /10

R 160757Z AUG 78
FM AMEMBASSY KHARTOUM
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8186
INFO AMEMBASSY ADDIS ABABA
AMEMBASSY CAIRO
AMEMBASSY JIDDA
AMEMBASSY MOSCOW
AMEMBASSY NAIROBI
AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

CONFIDENTIAL KHARTOUM 3780

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: ELA, PINS, PINT, SU
SUBJ: RAILWAY UNION ELECTS NEW CENTRAL COMMITTEE,
OUTS INCUMBENTS

REF: KHARTOUM 3234

1. NEWLY-ELECTED 55-MAN CENTRAL COMMITTEE OF SUDAN RAILWAY WORKERS TRADE UNION (SRWTU) IS DOMINATED BY SUPPORTERS OF NEW PRESIDENT, ABBAS KHIDER, ACCORDING TO ELECTION RESULTS ANNOUNCED AUGUST 13. FORMER PRESIDENT MOHAMED HASSAN ABDAL-LAH AND HIS FOLLOWERS RECEIVED ONLY 15 PERCENT OF VOTES CAST. GOVERNMENT-ORDERED SPECIAL ELECTION CONCLUDES EFFORTS BY ABBAS KHIDER TO OUST ABDALLAH THROUGH WORK STOPPAGES, APPEALS TO GOVERNMENT AND PROPAGANDA (REFTEL).

2. ABDALLAH WAS ACCUSED OF CORRUPTION, FAVORITISM AND POLITICAL ACTIVITY AS ARAB NATIONALIST SUPPORTED BY EGYPT.

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HE HAD BEEN RIVAL TO ABDALLA NASR GINAW FOR PRESIDENCY OF FEDERATION OF SUDANESE WORKERS TRADE UNIONS (FSWTU), USING HIS CHIEFTAINCY OF RAILWAYS UNION AS SPRINGBOARD. ABBAS KHIDER DENIES ANY POLITICAL BACKGROUND OR POLITICAL OBJECTIVES EXCEPT TO OUST ABDALLAH AND HIS COMMITTEE.

3. COMMENT: LEGITIMATE CONCERNS SUCH AS INFLATION AND

WORKING CONDITIONS WERE MAJOR FACTORS IN ABBAS' SUCCESSFUL MOBILIZATION OF RANK-AND-FILE AGAINST UNION LEADERSHIP. SRWTU WITH MEMBERSHIP OF 34,000 IS SUDAN'S LARGEST TRADE UNION. SINCE ANTIQUATED RAILWAY SYSTEM CARRIED ABOUT 90 PERCENT OF ALL SUDANESE IMPORTS AND EXPORTS, SRWTU HAS TREMENDOUS INFLUENCE AND HAS IN PAST EXERCISED THIS FOR POLITICAL PURPOSES. ELECTION OF DEVOUT MUSLIM BROTHER (ABBAS IS PART TIME IMAM AT ATBARA MOSQUE) WHO IS LOYAL TO NIMEIRI IS SETBACK TO COMMUNISTS WHO ARE PLAUSIBLY BELIEVED TO RETAIN HOPES OF TURNING SWRTU AGAINST REGIME. AS DEPARTMENT AWARE, RAILWAY UNION WAS AT ONE TIME COMMUNIST DOMINATED.

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Message Attributes

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Disposition Approved on Date:
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